

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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2012 Kuskokwim River Salmon Fishery News Release 14 **Kuskokwim River Subsistence Salmon Fishing Restrictions**

This is an announcement from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game at Bethel for subsistence salmon fishermen in the Kuskokwim River Drainage.

Lower Section of Subdistrict 1-B: Section 1

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently restricted to the use of gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh not exceeding 50-fathoms in length until 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 15, 2012. **Effective 12:00 a.m., Monday, July 16, 2012 subsistence salmon fishing with gillnets is open to unrestricted mesh size and Chinook salmon fishing with hook and line gear is open.**

This area is defined as, that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries upstream from a line from Apokak Slough to the southernmost tip of Eek Island to Popokamiut to a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located between the Kialik and Johnson Rivers. This area is also known as the Lower Section of commercial fishing Subdistrict 1-B. Excluded waters are non-salmon spawning tributaries: those portions of Kinak, Kialik, and Tagayarak rivers more than 100 yards upstream from the mouth of these rivers, are open with any mesh size gillnet and are not affected by these closures.

Upper Section of Subdistrict 1-B to Tuluksak: Section 2

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently restricted to the use of gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh not exceeding 50-fathoms in length until 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, July 18, 2012. **Effective 12:00**

a.m., Thursday, July 19, 2012 subsistence salmon fishing with gillnets is open to unrestricted mesh size and Chinook salmon fishing with hook and line gear is open.

This area is defined as that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries upstream from a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located between the Kialik and Johnson Rivers to a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located approximately half a mile upstream of the Tuluksak River mouth. This section includes the slough (locally known as Utak Slough) on the northwest side of the Kuskokwim River adjacent to the Tuluksak River mouth. Subsistence Chinook salmon fishing remains closed on the mainstem Kuskokwim River between ADF&G regulatory markers located approximately one half a mile above the mouth of the Tuluksak River to approximately one mile below the mouth of the Tuluksak River and including the Tuluksak River. Kuskokuak Slough remains closed from ADF&G regulatory markers located at the mouth of Kwethluk River downstream to ADF&G regulatory markers located at the mouth of Kuskokuak Slough. Old Kuskokuak Slough, Kasigluk, Kisarolik, and Kwethluk Rivers remain closed to subsistence Chinook salmon fishing.

Tuluksak to Chuathbaluk: Section 3

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently restricted to the use of gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh not exceeding 50-fathoms in length until 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 22, 2012. **Effective 12:00 a.m., Monday, July 23, 2012 subsistence salmon fishing with gillnets is open to unrestricted mesh size and Chinook salmon fishing with hook and line gear is open.** Additionally, a fish wheel used to take fish is **NOT** required to have a livebox.

This area is defined as that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries upstream from a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located approximately half a mile upstream of the Tuluksak River mouth to a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located at the downstream edge of Chuathbaluk. This section does NOT include the slough (locally known as Utak Slough) on the northwest side of the Kuskokwim River adjacent to the Tuluksak River mouth. Subsistence Chinook salmon fishing in the Aniak River remains closed. Excluded waters are non-salmon spawning tributaries: the Whitefish Lake drainage near Aniak and those portions of Discovery, Birch, and Swift creeks more than 100 yards upstream from the mouth of these rivers, are open with any mesh size gillnet and are not affected by these closures.

Chuathbaluk to the Holitna River mouth: Section 4

Currently subsistence salmon fishing is restricted to the use of gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh not exceeding 50-fathoms in length. Additionally, a fish wheel used to take fish must be equipped with a livebox that contains no less than 45 cubic feet of water volume while in operation. The livebox must be checked at least once every six hours while in operation and all Chinook salmon must be returned to the water alive. Chinook salmon fishing with hook and line gear remains closed.

The Department will continue to monitor escapements to determine when restrictions will be lifted in Section 4 and will make an announcement when that decision has been made.

This area is defined as that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries upstream from a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located at the downstream edge of Chuathbaluk to a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located downstream of the Holitna River mouth. Subsistence Chinook salmon fishing remains closed on the mainstem Kuskokwim River between ADF&G regulatory markers located at the mouth of George River to ADF&G regulatory markers located approximately half a mile downstream of George River.

The Holitna River mouth to the Headwaters of the Kuskokwim River: Section 5

Effective 12:00 a.m., Monday, July 16, 2012 subsistence salmon fishing is restricted to the use of gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh not exceeding 50-fathoms in length. **Subsistence Chinook salmon fishing with hook and line gear is open with a daily bag limit of 3 and no possession, season, or size limits.** Additionally, a fish wheel used to take fish is **NOT** required to have a livebox.

The Department will continue to monitor escapements to determine when restrictions will be lifted in Section 5 and will make an announcement when that decision has been made.

This area is defined as that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries upstream from a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located downstream of the Holitna River mouth upstream to the headwaters of the Kuskokwim River.

Run Assessment

Based on the Bethel Test Fishery the Chinook salmon run is nearing the end in the lower Kuskokwim River. The sockeye salmon abundance has also been declining over the past week. Chum salmon abundance has declined slightly in the past three days.

Further announcements will be made from the Bethel Fish and Game office and through local radio stations. News releases will be faxed to area villages and local fish processing companies.

For additional information concerning this news release:

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